



MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Affiliated with National Association of School Psychologists

March 13, 2007

Statement of Support from Michigan Association of School Psychologists

The Michigan Association of School Psychologists (MASP) strongly supports HB 4162 and HB 4091. These bills take a major step forward in protecting all children from bullying in school. MASP is pleased that the House Education Committee is taking up these bills, which recognize that school bullying is far more serious than common misrepresentations of bullying as a “phase” or “kids will be kids.” The truth is that bullying harms children physically, emotionally and socially and is a serious impediment to their education and well-being. MASP continues to believe that the best environment for facilitating learning is one in which students feel safe from physical and emotional harm, comfortable to participate in the learning process, and confident enough to try new things and explore all the resources that Michigan schools offer.

We believe that every school district should have a comprehensive anti-bullying policy in place that clearly defines and prohibits harassment and bullying and establishes consequences and remedial action for those who violate the policy. The legislation will help protect all students from this harmful and educationally disruptive behavior.

It is our hope that this legislation will put an end to derogatory name calling in our schools. Name calling frequently leads to social ostracism and can escalate into physical violence. It is critical that the adults in schools provide students with the ability to feel safe in their environment, especially in middle and high school where new experiences and uncertainty are a typical part of physical and emotional development. This legislation will also give more credence to peer monitoring and support groups who will be able to “do the right thing” without fear of social reprisal.

The Michigan Association of School Psychologists whole heartedly supports this legislation and gives our sincere thanks to the legislators who sponsored HB 4162 and HB 4091 and to all of the organizations that are working together to find common ground on legislation that will help reduce bullying in our schools. MASP would like to thank this committee for its interest in this very important issue and looks forward to the swift passage of this legislation. As always, MASP continues to offer any assistance needed by the legislature in support of students in Michigan’s schools.